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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of current subject cataloging practices for assigning geographical headings to local historical records in meeting the requirements of an escalating number of genealogist-patrons was examined. The findings indicated that catalogers use two general approaches in determining subject headings for local historical collections in the United States (subject or topic vs. geographical place), and that although the use of the geographical place as the primary subject entry scatters the material throughout the catalog under the names of cities, towns, churches, and the like, this type of entry is easier for the genealogist-patron to use. The system which stresses the subject or topic as the main entry or heading has predominated in library practices; however, emphasis has recently shifted to the use of the geographical place as the primary subject entry, and in 1972 the Library of Congress changed from the subject type entry to the geographical type entry. Thus current cataloging practices do meet current genealogical user requirements to the extent that new local history materials are given a geographical representation in the library catalog. However, unless institutional policy allows recataloging retrospectively, then to that extent current cataloging practices do not meet user requirements. (Author/KKC)

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DETERMINING GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECT HEADINGS FOR LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The question posed by this paper was, do current subject cataloging practices in assigning geographical headings to the library catalog cards for historical records adequately meet the user requirements of an escalating number of genealogist-patrons? The study was in three parts. First, a thorough examination of the relevant literature was made to identify current library subject cataloging practices. Second, a detailed description was presented of the so-called typical research requirements and search strategies of genealogists who specialize in American ancestory. Third, the search strategy and requirements were then projected against current cataloging practices. It was demonstrated, with few exceptions, that current cataloging practices do meet current genealogical user requirements to the extent that new local history materials are given a geographical representation in the library catalog. However, if it is an institutional policy not to recatalog retrospectively, then to that extent current cataloging practices do not meet user requirements.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Library patrons in increasing numbers are interested in and making use of institutional collections of local historical materials. Included in this user-growth are antiquarians, biographers, geographers, historians and genealogists. Referring to genealogists in particular, Sir Anthony Wagner, Chief Herald of the College of Arms in London, expresses the belief that "interest in family origins is widespread and tending to increase . . . [as] . . . the volume of inquiry and the variety and geographical dispersion of those from whom it comes grow year by year."[1]

John Hobbs, a British librarian, in his fundamental work (1962) on local history emphasizes Sir Anthony Wagner's statement on the growing number of genealogical type of local history users, stating, "A large number of the inquiries made of library local collections concern these personal aspects of history and although such pursuits are in many instances little more than pasttimes for an idle hour, genealogy, family history and heraldry must have their place in a representative collection."[2]

A recent article in U.S. News and World Report entitled, "Quest for Identity: Americans Go on a Genealogy Kick" reads "People in droves

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[1]Anthony R. Wagner, English Genealogy ([London]: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 1.

[2]John L. Hobbs, Local History and the Library (London: Andre Deutsch, Ltd., 1962), p. 215.

are pouring over old family records in libraries and archives across the U.S.--even abroad--to rediscover the past: their own."[1] It goes on to say:

> Libraries and archives with genealogical holdings report that business is on the increase.
>
> At the National Archives, in Washington, D.C., written inquiries have climbed from about 3,000 a month in 1954 to about 4,000 per week this year.
>
> In addition, nearly 1,000 people each week come in person to search through a million cubic feet of records.
>
> Deluged by growing interest in genealogy, the staff of 20 in the Archives' central reference section is running about a month behind in answering written inquiries. Visitors to the Archives sometimes have to wait an hour or more to see microfilmed records.[2]

Not only are the numbers of genealogical patrons increasing but also the scholastic and scholarship ability of those persons are evolving and improving. Genealogy, "that branch of history which involves the determination of family relationships,"[3] is more frequently being taught as an academic subject by an increasing number of colleges. Graduates who majored in genealogy from Brigham Young University, for example, numbered in the hundreds.[4]

Speaking on this changing evolution amongst genealogists, J. Carlyle Parker, librarian at Stanaslaus State College in California, says

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[1] "Quest for Identity: Americans Go on a Genealogy Kick" U.S. News & World Report (29 July 1974): 41.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Val D. Greenwood, The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 1.

[4] "Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, offered a program leading to a bachelor's degree in genealogical research for five years, and both BYU and Ricks College, Rexburg, Idago, have offered two-year associate degrees in genealogy. Though neither school still offers the degrees, they have the broadest and most diversified genealogical curricula available. Some other institutions in the U.S. offering courses in genealogy are American University, Washington, D.C.; Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama; Western Illinois University, Macomb; and The Church College of Hawaii, Laie. There are others overseas. (Ibid., p. 13)

> Criticism of genealogists by librarians is widespread. They stereotype them as little old ladies trying to "claim" a revolutionary soldier or an emigrant pioneer. The average genealgists of the '70s would like to be spared the image of the little old lady that idolizes her ancestors just as much as the librarians would like to eradicate the image of the bifocaled, bunned, spinster librarian.[1]

The Problem

The question posed by this paper was, do current subject cataloging practices in assigning geographical headings to the library catalog cards for local historical records adequately meet the user requirements of an escalating number of genealogist-patrons?

No attempt to identify the requirements of other local history collection users will be undertaken. Nor will any cost studies, card production, automation and other related library practices be studied. The philosophical bases of subject cataloging practices as found in the typical dictionary-type card catalog will also be excluded.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis that was formulated and studied was that present subject cataloging practices do not meet current genealogical user requirements.

Methodology

The study was in three parts. First, a thorough examination of the relevant literature was made to identify current library subject cataloging practices. Second, a detailed description was presented of the so-called typical research requirements and search strategies of genealogists who specialize in American ancestry. Third, the search strategy

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[1] J. Carlyle Parker, "Resources in the Field--Genealogy: Part I: Discrimination Against Genealogists" Wilson Library Bulletin (November 1972): 254.

and requirements was then projected against current cataloging practices to test the hypothesis previously stated.

Definition and Delimitation

For the purpose of this study only the requirements of genealogists specializing in research in records of the United States were considered. User requirements of researchers specializing in other countries are similar and much of the material discussed is applicable to their requirements as well.

The philosophical bases of subject cataloging practices as found in the typical dictionary-type card catalog were excluded. This paper was written upon the basic assumption as stated by Charles A. Cutter, the pioneer developer of the dictionary-type catalog found in virtually all American libraries today: "The convenience of the public is always to be set before the ease of the cataloger."[1,2]

Also, it was assumed that articles and information found in library literature would adequately represent current and retrospective cataloging practices in assigning geographical subject headings for local historical collections.

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[1]Paul S. Dunkin, Cataloging U.S.A. (Chicago: ALA, 1969), p. 7.

[2]David J. Haykin, former chief, subject cataloging division, the Library of Congress, was even more emphatic about needs when he stated that the "reader is the focus in all cataloging principles and practice. All other considerations such as convenience and the desire to arrange entries in some logical order are secondary to the basic rule that the headings in word and structure, should be that which the reader will seek in the catalog. . . . Accepting the above principle as a cataloging axiom the fundamental rules are, broadly speaking, inevitable results of the experience of the librarians in meeting the demands of the readers who seek material on particular topics." Subject Headings, A Practical Guide (Washington: Government Printing Offices, 1959), p. 7.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE SEARCH

Current Practices

Relatively few articles have been devoted exclusively to determining geographical subject headings and none on the genealogical user's relationship to such headings. Furthermore, as shown in the literature, a surprising amount of divergent opinion existed discussing what appeared to be a standard routine cataloging practice.

A reoccurring theme was the problem of whether the subject or the geographic place was more important, and which was to be the primary or main entry in the library catalog. Bartol Brinkler, Chief Subject Cataloger at Harvard College, in perhaps as clearly insightful a discussion representing this divergency as any on the heading problem, stated that

> Almost from the beginning there has been considerable debate in library literature on the question of whether it is more important to emphasize the place . . . or the topic . . . . Current practice, with its emphasis on assigning the one or two most specific subject headings, probably tends towards the more frequent use of [subject or topic] headings except, of course, when the place itself is obviously the only subject for the book. The assumption is that the reader is interested primarily in a specific subject and only secondarily in its local applications.[1]

Mr. Brinkler classified the two basic options used by catalogers

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[1]Bartol Brinkler, "The Geographical Approach to Materials in the Library of Congress Subject Headings" Library Resources & Technical Services 6 (Winter, 1962): 49.

as Type A and Type B.[1] Type A is defined as a "topical heading with geographical subdivisions, e.g.

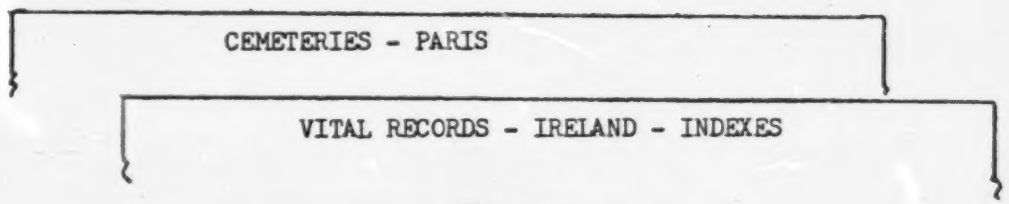

Figure 1

"Type B is defined as the name of place (country, region, state, city, etc.) with a topical subdivision, e.g.

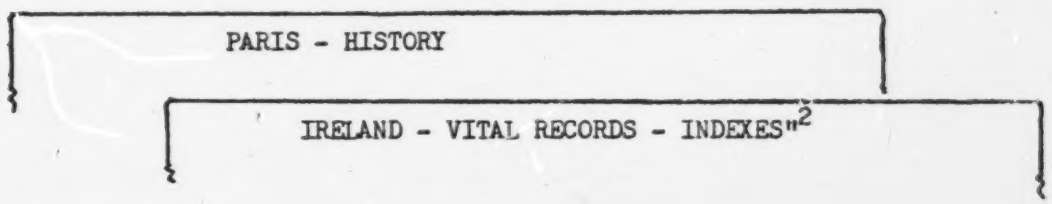

Figure 2

In response to the Brinkler article, John W. Cronin, director, Processing Department of the Library of Congress [3] commented as to its practices in general:

> With respect to our practice, the Library is guided by the desire to give the different categories of readers a direct approach to the subject matter. Therefore, subject headings are divided by place or place by subject in accordance with the presumed primary interest of the readers.

---

[1] Actually he includes a third choice, Type C, which is defined as a "phrase heading beginning with a geographical adjective, e.g., NORWEGIAN LITERATURE." Since the Type C heading is used almost exclusively with literature it has not been included in this discussion. (Ibid.)

[2] Ibid.

[3] The Library of Congress, by the volume and quantity of their publications, in practice if not in theory essentually establishes the so-called "subject heading" rules used by many if not most libraries in the United States.

> In more concrete terms, subdivision of place by subject has been used in subjects whose predominant interest is focused on the area, i.e., in the case of history, geography, and government. Where the subject is primarily of interest to the subject specialist, subdivision of subject by place is applied, i.e., in the natural sciences, technology, and law. In other cases, such as especially in the social sciences, the cataloger must decide whether the subject or the area are of predominant interest to the reader.[1]

It was interesting to note that November, 1972, in an apparent review of the Library of Congress' cataloging practices the following announcement was made:

> In response to the needs of genealogists and local historians, the Subject Cataloging Division has started assigning at least one subject heading in which a place name is the first element to all material of interest to readers in these two fields. This addition assures that subject cards for such works will be cumulated under the name of the locality instead of being concealed in extensive files to topical headings. This device will obviate the necessity to read great numbers of titles in order to locate those of pertinence to the researcher.[2]

In an unusual approach which is relevant to the question of the heading problem, The Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah,[3] hereafter referred to as the Genealogical Society, goes even further with developing main subject headings for geographical locality-based entries.

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[1]John W. Cronin, "Comment By the Library of Congress" Library Resources & Technical Services 6 (Winter 1962): 63.

[2]"Subject Headings to Aid Local Historians and Genealogists" Library of Congress Cataloging Service, Bulletin 105 (November 1972): 15.

[3]The Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (L.D.S.) was organized in 1893 in Salt Lake City, Utah, for the purpose of collecting and making available records of genealogical value to its membership. From a small, insignificant collection housed in one room of the Church Historian's office, its library has subsequently grown in the past eighty years until it is the largest institution of its kind in the world. One of the largest users of microfilm, and a pioneer in that field, its holdings total nearly one million rolls of microfilm (one hundred foot lengths) or the equivalent of 3,801,373 books of three hundred pages each. In addition, the book collection of the Genealogical Society totals 130,000 volumes. (Statistics quoted from the "Annual Statistical Report," Salt Lake City Deseret News, 6 April 1974, Church Section, p. 5.)

In addition to the normal subject, author, and title entries found in a regular dictionary catalog they add a special "locality card"[1] which in filing practice is very similar to the alphabetico-classed catalog. This catalog

> . . . had some vogue in American libraries prior to the dominance of the dictionary catalog, /and/ represents an attempt to combine some of the advantages of a classed catalog with the directness and ease of consultation of the alphabetical subject catalog of the present day. Its entries were names of broad subjects alphabetically arranged, each followed by a topic of the next order of comprehensiveness, further subdivided if necessary by a still lower order. Under each heading in the alphabet of broad subject headings there was an alphabetic arrangement of topics, and under some of the topics a further subarrangement. The grouping of topics resembled the classed catalog, with the important difference that the broad subjects themselves were in alphabetic rather than systematic order and the topics under each were again arranged alphabetically, not on the basis of their relationship.[2]

In the instance of The Genealogical Society, each county and/or state is considered a "broad subject". Records of counties or their equivalent jurisdictions are considered the next order of comprehensiveness, and each are further subdivided within itself by city, town, or village. For example:

NEW YORK, ALBANY CO., ALBANY - VITAL RECORDS

Figure 3

New York state is the broad topic. Albany County, being a part of New York state, is a subtopic and the city of Albany is a further subdivision and still a lower order.

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[1]The Genealogical Society, The Dictionary Card Catalog (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Genealogical Society, n.d.).

[2]Haykin, pp. 2-3.

"In effect the headings for a given topic in an alphabetico-classed and a dictionary catalog are equally specific. The difference is in the fact that in the former the specific topic is the last element in a complex heading whereas in the latter it is named directly. . . ."[1]

At first the advantages of the indirect entry type subject entries for local history collections may not be apparent. What it does is bring together in the subject card catalog all material or records on a given place or area, and assumes that the interest and significance of certain geographical areas are inseparable from the larger area.[2] If, for example, a library user wanted to find out what records existed for Utah County, Utah, a search in a standard dictionary-type catalog would require a check under each town within the county as well as the Utah County portion. As there are over thirty distinct places in Utah County, the search becomes quite involved and time consuming. On the other hand, using the "indirect locality" approach, everything for Utah County would be under the heading

UTAH, UTAH CO.-

Figure 4

including each town or other minor municipal jurisdictions.

Rhetoric

William Charles Berwick, a British librarian, speaking more specifically about local history collections, stated:

> The main problem to be settled is which will be the most convenient arrangement of material on the county, by subject or by locality; that is to say, will the greatest number of readers enquire,

---

[1]Ibid. p. 3.

[2]Ibid. pp. 30-31.

> for example, for all books on the churches of Sussex, or for all books of Chichester, including its cathedral and churches. Or, again, will people ask for the history of sport in a certain ward in the town, or for the history of sport in the town as a whole.[1]

J. D. Brown, discussing the same problem, said, "My own preference is for a topographical arrangement with a subject sub-division. This appears to me not only the more practical method as established by a rather long experience, but also because the essential characteristic of a local collection is topography."[2]

Considering, as quoted above, that the basis of a local history collection is locality, it seems that more librarians, especially catalogers, should consider the locality as a subject in its own right. James Ormerod, another British librarian, suggests that the only satisfactory method is entry under both subject and places.

> My experience in cataloging the Derbyshire collection has shown that double entry is necessary for books about the county as a whole and for many individual places as well. For instance, a reader wishes to know what has been written about the painted windows in the church of, let us say, Morley. Later on he wishes to learn what other places in the county possess notable glass. The only way to answer both questions is to make cards under both place and subject.[3]

Marguarite Fogleman and Ray Rowland, both American collece librarians, in their excellent article which recently appeared in RQ discussed a possible compromise very similar to Ormerod's on the locality heading controversy between the Type A and Type B entries, by stating:

---

[1]William Charles Berwick, A Manual of Classification for Librarians and Bibliographers (London: Grafton & Co., 1926), p. 278.

[2]James Duff Brown, Subject Classification with Tables, Indexes, Etc., for the Subdivision of Subjects, 2nd ed. rev. (London: Grafton & Co., 1914), Introduction.

[3]James Ormerod, How to Catalog a Local Collection (Birmingham, Eng.: C. Combridge Ltd., 1933), p. 8.

> This will necessitate an additional card in the catalog, but the convenience to the users will offset the small cost of the additional card. Therefore, the first policy for adding subject headings for local history material would be: All material having any information on the county, city, town, and/or state should be given one or more subject headings to locate it geographically.[1]

The following subject areas are those which Fogleman and Rowland[2] suggest require particular attention, as they view the problem. These suggestions with sample headings are reproduced to demonstrate one such compromise.

> a. Material on education. All volumes should have one or more subject headings to bring out education and phases of education as a subdivision under the state.

GEORGIA - EDUCATION - HISTORY

GEORGIA - UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGES

Figure 5

> b. Biographies. Additional headings should be made with biography as a subdivision under the state:

GEORGIA - BIOGRAPHY

Figure 6

> For those interested in family history, genealogies which refer to local families should have the additional heading with genealogy as a subdivision under the state:

GEORGIA - GENEALOGY

Figure 7

---

[1]Marguerite F. Fogleman and A. Ray Rowland, "Local Hisotry in the Small College Library, A Matter of Subject Headings" RQ, XI (Fall, 1971): 60.

[2]Ibid. pp. 61-63.

If the biographee was known for his work in some particular area this should also be brought out by additional subject headings as a subdivision under the state.

GEORGIA - BIOGRAPHY

GEORGIA - HISTORIANS

Figure 8

c. Religion. Histories of religious bodies in the state should have an added subject entry with the sect as a subdivision under the state and the subject CHURCHES as a subdivision under the state.

GEORGIA - METHODIST CHURCH

GEORGIA - CHURCHES

Figure 9

d. County histories. Histories of counties should have two additional subject entries to bring out the fact that it is a county history and that it contains some history of the state.

GEORGIA - COUNTIES - HISTORY

GEORGIA - HISTORY - COLQUITT CO.

Figure 10

e. Authors. In lieu of pulling materials written by city and state authors for a special collection, an additional subject heading can bring out this information and still leave the material in its regular place in the classification. All works by local or state authors would contain the subdivision AUTHORS under the names of the cities and states. For example:

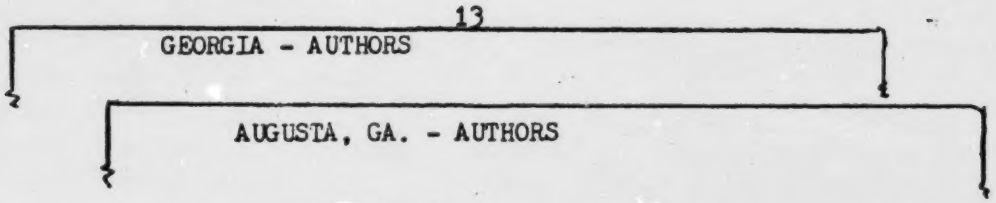

Figure 11

f. Cities. Additional headings will be required for materials which deal with cities only. This would bring out not only the state but also the city.

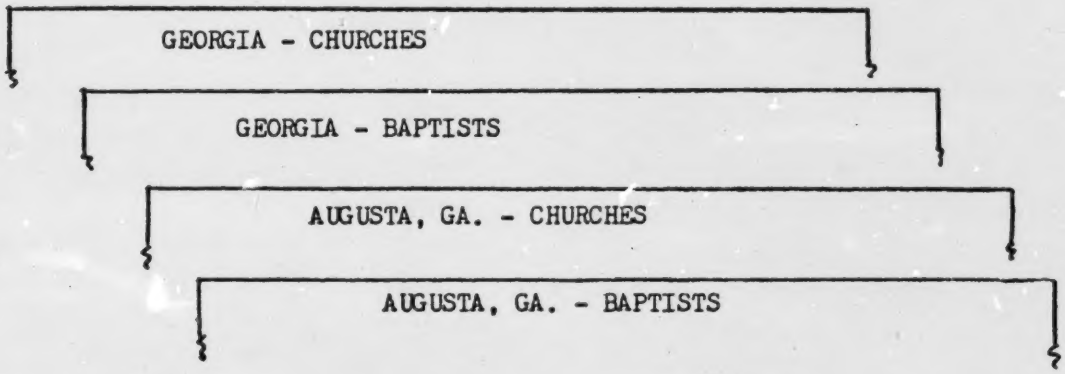

Figure 12

g. State, in addition to city heading. Materials limited to a city normally is assigned subject headings only as a subdivision under the city.

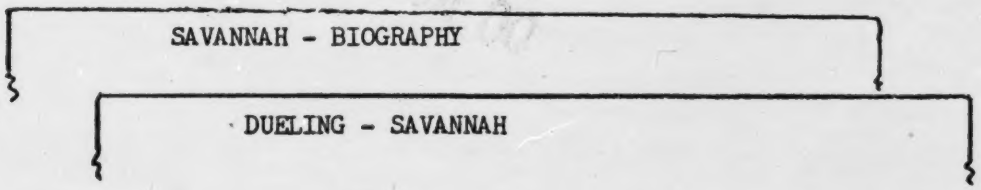

Figure 13

In order to bring out material on the state, additional headings are required:

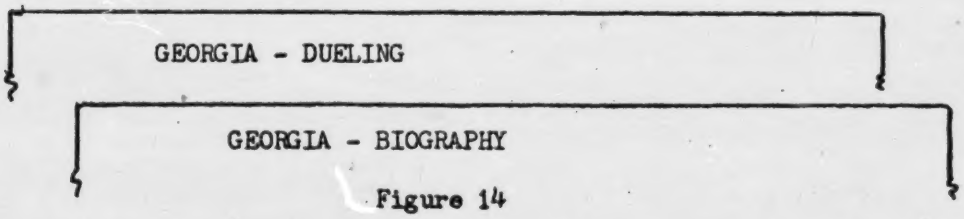

Figure 14

h. Business. Histories of businesses and industries are lost to users interested in local history if they are left in their regular place in the collection, and have only the specific subject heading for the name of the company.

ATLANTA STEEL CO.

ATLANTIC STEEL CO.

Figure 15

To make this more useful, two additional headings are required with the subdivision INDUSTRIES under city and under the state.

ATLANTA - INDUSTRIES

GEORGIA - INDUSTRIES

Figure 16

i. Imprints. Local printing may be brought out in the subject catalog by the use of headings to indicate its place in printing history. A date with historical significance may be chosen as a "cut-off" date, and an additional heading made to bring out the imprints of the area before that date. The date for each may be taken from the title page. When these are filed in the card catalog, a chronological order with the earliest date first gives a quick summary of local imprints:

AUGUSTA, GA. - IMPRINTS, 1795

Figure 17

j. Others. Consideration of the approach to local material should be made in all cataloging. When the subject headings have been assigned by another library, particular attention is needed for local entries. A few types are brought out here.

Inversion

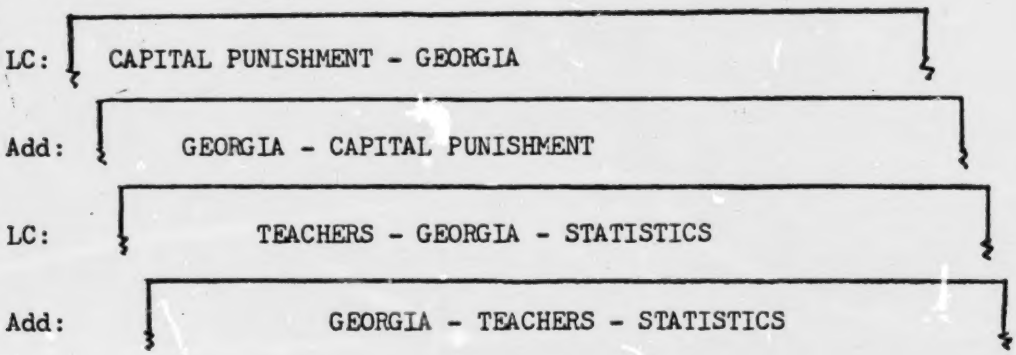
LC: CAPITAL PUNISHMENT - GEORGIA
Add: GEORGIA - CAPITAL PUNISHMENT
LC: TEACHERS - GEORGIA - STATISTICS
Add: GEORGIA - TEACHERS - STATISTICS

Figure 18

Addition of area not mentioned by LC

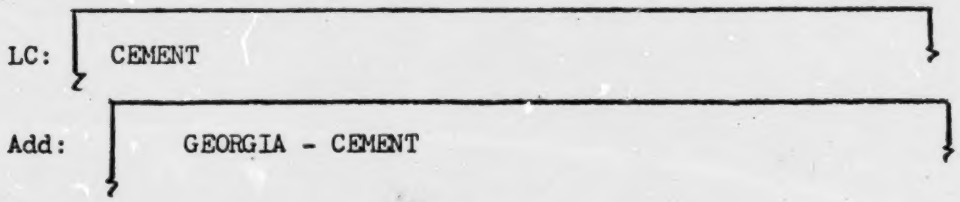

Figure 19

Addition of state to city

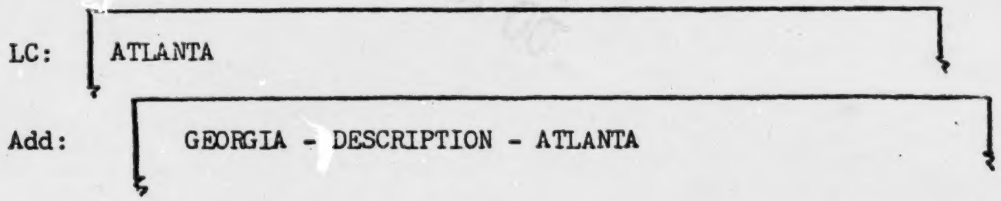

Figure 20

Addition of place to period

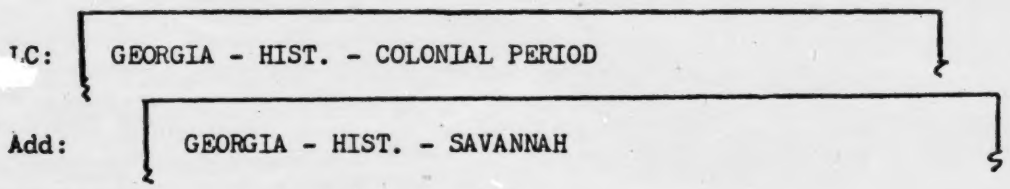

Figure 21

Addition of heading for a divided catalog

Main entry for college catalog:

Georgia. Augusta College

Add: GEORGIA. AUGUSTA COLLEGE

Figure 22

Addition of minor places in a telephone directory.

Principle heading:

AUGUSTA, GA. -

DIRECT - TELEPHONE

Add: GEORGIA - DIRECT - TELEPHONE - AUGUSTA

NORTH AUGUSTA, S.C. - DIRECT - TELEPHONE

BATH, S.C. - DIRECT - TELEPHONE

HAPHZIBAH, GA. - DIRECT - TELEPHONE

Figure 22

Addition of local monuments.

LC: U.S. - HIST. - CIVIL WAR

PERSONAL NARRATIVES - CONFEDERATE SIDE

Add: AUGUSTA, GA. - CONFEDERATE MONUMENT

Figure 22

General Guidelenes

Regardless of the heading emphasis, whether geographical or subject, there are several general guidelines which should be followed when cataloging local historical collections. The following represent some of the more significant statements found during the literature searches.

Fogleman and Rowland comment that:

> Local history, whether considered as town, city, county and/or state, may be lost to the library user unless it can be reached through the card catalog. A search of the catalog must reveal entries on local history or must refer to an additional index or file. Some libraries have a separate card file for local history, but this often makes a reference librarian necessary for interpretation. Making the card catalog the subject guide to the collection certainly makes the search easier.[1]

Alberta Pantle, in reference to the cataloger and the local history collection, says, "To save wear and tear on the books and pamphlets and our own time in reference, we need to catalog in detail."[2]

Speaking on a somewhat different topic, but one which certainly is relevant and critical to local history users, Florence B. Murray states

> A local collection should be unusually generous in the use of subject headings, preferring them to "see also" references, so that its catalog becomes a series of bibliographies on local subjects. A general library, public or university, should not try to make its catalog serve as a bibliography for all subjects--better bibliographies are in print for the majority of topics. The catalog of a local collection, however, usually has to serve as a catalog and a series of bibliographies because very often no bibliography has been compiled for that locality.[3]

Summary

As has been discussed in this chapter there are two standard

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[1]Ibid. p. 59.

[2]Alberta Pantle, "Making the Most of a Local History Collection" Journal of Cataloging and Classification 12:19 (January 1956).

[3]Florence B. Murray, "The Contents and Catalog of a Local Collection With Special Reference to Subject Headings" Catalogers' and Classifiers' Yearbook, no. 4 (American Library Association, 1934).

approaches to determining geographical subject headings for local historical collections as reflected in contemporary cataloging practices. They are referred to as Type A, which stresses the subject as the primary heading, and Type B, which emphasizes the geographical place as the main heading. Traditionally the Type A approach has predominated as the preferred method, however, in recent years increasing emphasis has shifted to the Type B alternative. Some librarians suggested that a compromise between the two options would be preferrable even to the extent of using both types of entries in the library catalog.

An unusually distinctive option stressing the indirect heading approach and assuming that certain geographical areas are inseparable from its parent larger jurisdiction has been developed by The Genealogical Society in an apparent effort to more adequately serve their almost exclusively genealogist-user type of patron. Reminiscent of the alphabetico-classed catalog, it offers a novel approach to some of the difficulties of the Type A and B cataloging practices.

CHAPTER III

GENEALOGICAL METHODOLOGY, AN INTERPRETATION

Genealogy is defined as "that branch of history which involves a scientific study for the determination of family relationships."[1] As such, the genealogical researcher will attempt to use a scientific approach to the ancestral problems encountered. To the degree that this is achieved, genealogy can be defined as a science as it may well deserve. "Unfortunately the work produced by some tend to lower it to the level of a mere pasttime built upon false premises."[2]

While genealogy is classified as a science, it does differ somewhat from other related subjects such as history in that it is technical rather than adademic in its approach. It is a "how to do" subject, closely tied to research in historical documents and the information contained therein, although genealogical research differs little from research in any other discipline. In reality, genealogical research is a long, painstaking program of search and analysis repeated over and over again.[3]

As so ably explained in Val Greenwood's recent and thoroughly comprehensive textbook on American genealogical research, the research

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[1]Greenwood, p. 6.

[2]Ibid., p. 5.

[3]Norman E. Wright and David H. Pratt, Genealogical Research Essentials (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1967), p. 39.

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process or cycle can be outlined in six steps. They are:

1. Find out what others may have done already with the same problem.
2. Analize what has been done and make some judgment of its validity.
3. Determine research objectives based upon analysis and plan research into original documents.
4. Gather the data from original research and record them in a systematic method.
5. Evaluate the data to ascertain whether the research objectives have been reached and to synthesize the relevant data into meaningful form. If the objectives have not been reached, steps 3 and 4 must be repeated.
6. Make research findings available to others.[1]

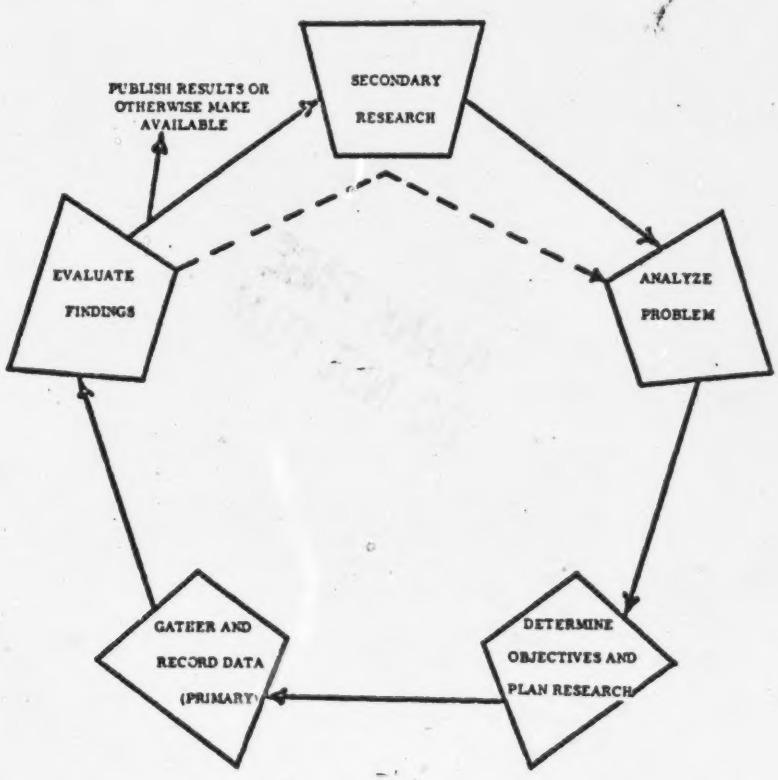

Figure 23 The Research Process[2]

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[1]Greenwood, pp. 2-3.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

Genealogical research can also be seen as a generally lineal movement from what can be termed as secondary compiled sources (A), to those records which are defined as primary, original records (B). As graphically shown in figure 24, there is an overlapping area at the union of the two (C) which is often difficult to define.

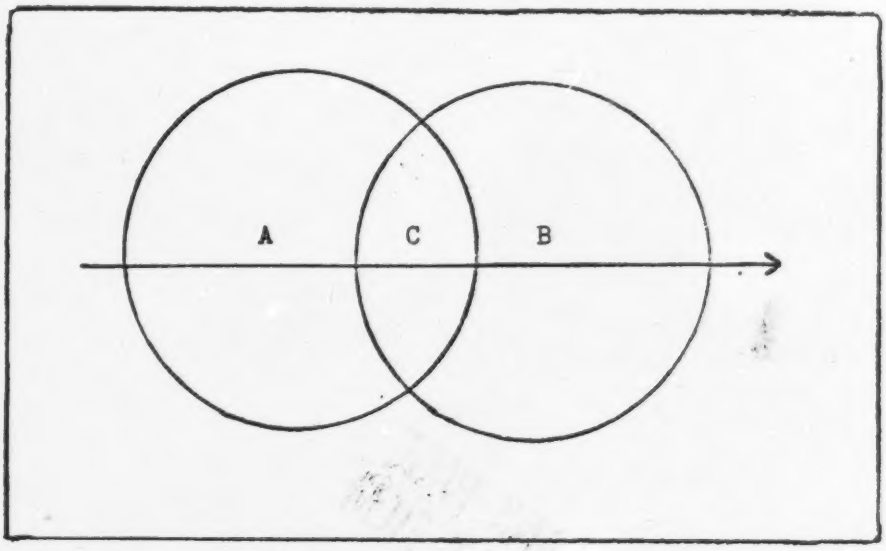

Figure 24 The Universe of Genealogy

Research into secondary compiled sources is popularly referred to in genealogical circles as a research "survey" and varies little regardless of geographical background or heritage. "The researcher is not attempting to establish the facts beyond reasonable doubt in the survey, but is merely gathering data from the several sources available to visualize what has already been done on a particular genealogical problem."[1] Among other steps, contacts or correspondance with immediate relatives and other

[1]Wright and Pratt, p. 148.

family members will be undertaken to find out what research has already been accomplished. A search will arbitrarily be taken to see if a published family history or genealogy exists by checking lists such as Genealogies in the Library of Congress;[1] Munsell's Index to American Genealogies,[2] as well as the card catalog of local public research libraries.

In recent years there has been a flood of new genealogical periodicals with a resulting upsurge of magazine articles on families. These periodicals together with any compiled indexes, limited as they may be, will also be utilized. Perhaps one reason for the explosion of new genealogical magazines is that it offers an inexpensive publishing alternative to the expensive and lengthy family genealogy book.

As implied, a genealogist cannot guarantee the success of productivity of a research survey, but considerable experience has shown there are few American ancestral lines someone has not already initiated some work on somewhere. A successful survey may save untold hours and quantities of money.

Once the survey is nearing completion and the searcher has (hopefully) been successful, he is ready to begin research into primary original documents. At this stage the objective is to find records of towns, churches, parishes, and county court houses which contain data and information about his ancestors. The genealogist places priority upon the documents which provide birth, marriage and death information or its equivalent. If unable to find such records, the next records used are those

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[1] Marion J. Kaminkow (ed.), Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography (Baltimore: Magna Carta Book Co., 1972).

[2] Joel Munsell, et. al. Index to American Genealogies (Albany, New York: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1895).

which will give relationships in a more secondary sense. Probate, census and other legal-type records receive much emphasis particularly in those areas outside of New England.

Genealogists will often need to search any and all records extant for a given time period in an geographical locality in an attempt to find clues of his family. His research calendars or notes will often consist of an extended bibliography of the records searched in that jurisdiction. Ancestral searching in the southern states is perhaps the most difficult, partly because of the distruction of records during the Civil War but mainly due to the nature of the southern settlement patterns and record keeping practices.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND THE LIBRARY

The genealogist-type researcher is heavily dependent upon libraries and record repositories for local historical materials necessary to identify family relationships. Inasmuch as the library card catalog represents an index or "key" to the institutional informational collections, the researcher's success is measured to a large degree by its effectiveness.

The subject entries in typical dictionary card catalogs are the most useful for genealogists, as he will generally approach library research materials by family names (subject) and/or by geographic places (subject). Author and title entries are of relatively minor importance in comparison, as the authors or titles of specific books are seldom known by the ancestral researcher and much of the material used will be in unpublished or manuscript form. This chapter is devoted to an analysis of the geographical subject headings used in the card catalog in relationship to the two parts of genealogical research, the survey and primary research.

Research Survey

As discussed in chapter III, the research survey focuses on identifying the compiling efforts of others in synthesizing information from original records, either published or in manuscript form. The family

history genealogy is often overlooked by librarians in compiling sources of local history and devising geographical subject headings for such historical collections. A typical book, The Houstouns of Georgia by Edith D. Johnson,[1] for example, would have a single subject entry

HOUSTOUN FAMILY

Figure 25

if listed according to past practices of the Library of Congress (Type A). This history of one of the most important families in early Georgia contains much material of historical as well as genealogical value.

Fortunately, most genealogist-type library users will identify the existence of family genealogy books in most library card catalogs by doing a thorough genealogical research survey. The searcher will often use a strategy called a surname "target" approach in which the card catalog is checked for entries under 1. the complete name of the male ancestor; 2. the surname of the ancestor; 3. the maiden surname of the spouse; 4. the maiden surname of the male ancestor's mother; 5. the maiden surname of the spouse's mother and 6. the surname of the daughter's spouse.

However, should The Houstouns of Georgia or other such genealogies be missed during the survey and original research begun in local history records of Georgia or similar localities, the library user would, in most instances, miss it because of inadequate subject entry in the library card catalog.

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[1] Edith D. Johnson, The Houstouns of Georgia. (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1950).

The Library of Congress in 1972 decided to add a Type B entry for materials of value to local historians and genealogists. In this instance the heading would probably be

GEORGIA - GENEALOGY

Figure 26

Such an entry would certainly be helpful to the local history collection user.

Periodicals are treated in much the same fashion by genealogists as family histories. Libraries which catalog periodicals usually provide title and subject entries only. However, should the library decide to provide analytical entries, the Type B entry would be preferred from the genealogical user's viewpoint for much the same reasons as shown for family genealogies.

Primary Research

Original documents such as those found in local historical collections hold the answer to most of the ancestral problems encountered by the genealogical researcher. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to a study of subject headings in relationship to primary research.

The most important records are those of the earliest known community or rural area where the ancestral family resided. Libraries have traditionally entered locality materials under the subject the documents represent (Type A). Vital records, as one of the first records of importance to the genealogist would be entered under such an approach as

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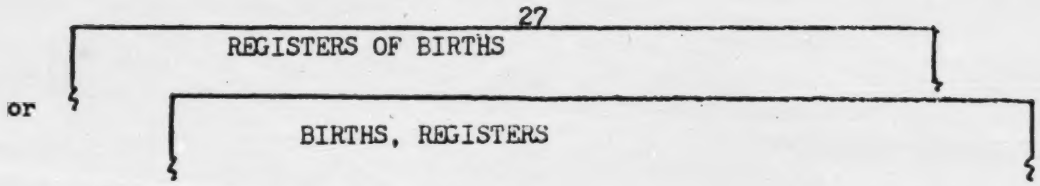

Figure 27

One of the main problems with the Type A approach is the extensive amount of material which would be filed under these general subjects, also the great divergency of topical headings local historical material can be entered under. For example, death type records could be listed by the following subjects, among others: Obituaries, death notices, death records, cemetary records, sexton's accounts, tombstone inscriptions and inscriptions, to name a few.

Using a Type B approach, the specific geographical locality itself becomes the subject entry used.

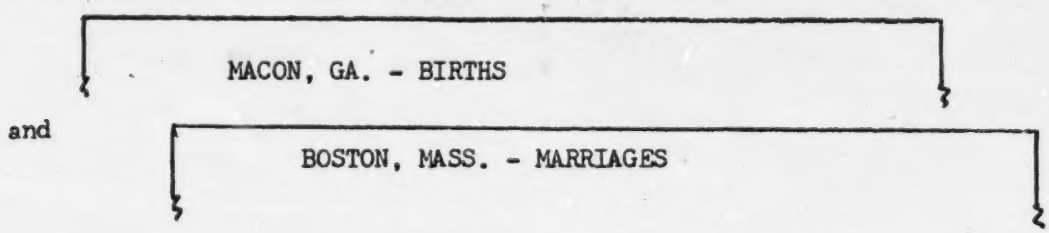

Figure 28

One of the distinct advantages of the Type B approach for the genealogist is that it substantially reduces the search time by bringing nearly every document or record about a given place together in the card file. In essence the genealogist is more interested in records of a given locality than the grouping of records by topic. A limitation created by entering records by specific or direct geographical place is that the records of adjacent related geographical areas are scattered throughout

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the entire card catalog. Records of two adjacent communities, for instance, could be in opposite portions of the alphabetically arranged catalog.

Another problem is the hidden geographical entry, i.e., those places which are obscure or not generally known to the average patron and therefore difficult to find in the card catalog. Many records are never used because of the limited geographical background of the library patron. One of the most important features of The Genealogical Society's indirect locality approach is that it brings related geographical places together. As pointed out previously (see page 7), each level of civil jurisdiction is a subclass of its larger civil jurisdictions. For the genealogical researcher it is easier to check one place in the card catalog and find all of the material for that jurisdictional area including all places which are not familiar to him.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Problem Statement and Procedures Used

The purpose of this paper was to answer the question, "Do current subject cataloging practices in assigning geographical headings to the library catalog cards for local historical records adequately meet the user requirements of an escalating number of genealogist patrons?" The study was in three parts. First, a thorough examination of the relevant literature was made in chapter II to identify current library practices. Second, in chapter III a detailed description was resented of the so-called typical research requirements and search strategies of genealogists who specialize in American ancestry. Third, chapter IV was devoted to compairing the search strategy and requirements against current cataloging practices to test the hypothesis previously stated.

Summary of Findings

It appears that catalogers have used two general approaches in determining subject headings for local historical collections in the United States. One, which stresses the subject or topic as the main entry or headings (Type A), has predominated in library practices; however, in recent years increasing emphasis has shifted to the second approach which uses the geographical place as the primary subject entry (Type B).

This study has presented evidence that the geographical type of entry representing the local history collection is easier to use and represents a distinct advantage over the subject approach entry for the genealogist-patron. However, it must be pointed out that the direct entry type of geographical entry is only a qualified improvement. As previously stated, the main problem is that this approach does not bring together material on one state or county but scatters it throughout the entire catalog under the names of cities, towns, churches, etc. This deficiency represents a serious question to an otherwise affirmative answer to the question posed by this study.

Inasmuch as the changeover by the Library of Congress from the subject type entry to the geographical type entry came in 1972, and as most of local historical documents in libraries were cataloged previous to that date, many years will pass before the genealogist can safely use the geographical approach to the exclusion of the topical entry. Only the exceptionally perceptive and innovative library with adequate financial means will attempt to retrospectively recatalog that part of the institute's collection of local historical records to adequately meet user requirements of the increasing number of genealogist-patrons.

Therefore, with few exceptions, current cataloging practices do meet current genealogical user requirements to the extent that <u>new</u> local history materials are given a geographical representation in the library catalog. However, if it is an institutional policy not to recatalog retrospectively, then to that extent current cataloging practices do not meet user requirements.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following areas of study may provide more information and insight into the problems of the card catalog-genealogist user interface.

1. An indepth study of the precise types of subjects requiring indirect subdivisions as opposed to the use of the direct entry.

2. The extent that the indirect (alphabetical-classed) locality subdivision as represented in The Genealogical Society's "locality" arrangement expressed in chapter III can or should be implemented in the "main stream" of cataloging practices for local historical collections.

3. The extent that libraries have recataloged retrospective holdings of the local history type should be determined.

4. A sharper focus is needed on the problem of the "hidden" geographical entries that are not obvious to the normal library patron and possible solutions to that dilemma found.

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